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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUJA #2111 3271508  
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P 231508Z NOV 09 ZDK ZUI #2598  
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7552  
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 0196  
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0032  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0624  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0481  
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 2345  
RHMFIASS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEAAIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFIASS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 002111

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/RSA, AF/W, INR/AA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL PINR NI

SUBJECT: ECOWAS PRESIDENT STEPPING DOWN FOR POSTING IN  
BRUSSELS

REF: ABUJA 2076 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Political Counselor James P. McAnulty  
for reasons in Sections 1.4. (b) and (d).

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CHAMBAS TO LEAVE FOR ACP POST  
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¶1. (U) Nigerian Foreign Minister Chief Ojo Maduekwe opened the Sixty-Third Ordinary Session of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Council of Ministers Meeting in Abuja November 20 by announcing that the Council of Ministers of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP) selected ECOWAS President Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas as the ACP's new Secretary General in Brussels. Chambas will step down as ECOWAS President in the first quarter of 2010 to assume his new position by March 1.

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NO DEFINITIVE WORD ON SUCCESSOR  
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¶2. (C) Neither Foreign Minister Maduekwe nor anyone at the ECOWAS Secretariat indicated who would replace Dr. Chambas. European Commission diplomat Tim Baines told PolMilOff November 19 that ECOWAS would announce Chambas' successor at the December 21 ECOWAS Heads of State Meeting in Abuja. The Swedish Charge d'Affaires and a French PolOff speculated the previous day to PolMilOff that current ECOWAS Vice President Jean de Dieu Somda would most likely replace Ghanaian-born Chambas as interim ECOWAS President until the end of 2010. They remarked that another, but less likely, choice would be an individual from Burkina Faso. If this scenario materialized, Somda would need to step down, as the ECOWAS President and Vice President must come from different countries.

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COMMENT  
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¶3. (C) Today's announcement confirms information passed to us by ECOWAS Peace and Security Commissioner Colonel Mahamane

Toure about a likely change at the top of ECOWAS (reftel).  
We have heard from knowledgeable contacts that the new ECOWAS  
President would likely come from a Francophone country. We  
will monitor and report any news regarding a successor.  
SANDERS